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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000581

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES -- JUNE 19

REF: KINSHASA 567

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Samuel V. Brock for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) The information contained in this cable consists principally of spot reports from various sources. This cable is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

Security Situation -- Haut Uele/Dungu  
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¶2. (SBU) According to MONUC liaison officers, the UPDF believes LRA leader Joseph Kony is in the Central African Republic. MONUC has no independent confirmation but notes that UPDF information has usually been reliable.

¶3. (SBU) Many Sudanese children are presently staying at the MONUC Company Operating Base in Dungu, awaiting repatriation to Sudan. MONUC sources did not know if the children are LRA escapees or refugees who fled their homes.

Security Situation -- North Kivu  
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¶4. (SBU) An estimated 200 FDLR troops attacked the FARDC on June 16 in Ntsombiro, a small village 15 kilometers south of Lubero. Two FARDC and two FDLR cadres were killed in the attack.

¶5. (SBU) At present, there are approximately 600 FARDC troops stationed in and around Goma, a significant increase. The number is expected to rise to 1,600 by June 30, when President Kabila is scheduled to visit Goma for the DRC's Independence Day. Tensions and trepidation will rise concurrently, as residents' fear of predatory troops grows. Salary payments for troops in Zone 1 began June 17. Payments for Zones 2 and 3 are scheduled to begin June 18 and 19. Anecdotal information from Goma residents indicate that crime is on the rise, and people are taking extra security precautions. Goma poloff will take a larger sampling the week of June 17-24 to assess the growing tension.

Security Situation -- South Kivu  
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¶6. (SBU) MONUC forces around Mwenga are on high alert and are conducting heavy patrolling on the Bukavu-Mwenga axis. The FDLR has conducted several increasingly bold hit and run attacks to destroy bridges along the road. Analysts believe the FDLR seeks to destroy transport routes to prevent further Kimia II deployments.

¶7. (SBU) Following the seizure of an arms cache in Uvira earlier this week (reftel), MONUC has learned that the Deputy

Commander of the FARDC 10th Military Region may be involved in the arms smuggling. Further investigations to follow.

¶8. (SBU) As FARDC morale continues to drop, some contacts report that government troops are actually defecting to the FDLR. (Note: This may likely be true, since many of the recently integrated PARECO and Mai Mai militias had strong ties to the FDLR -- some may have even been FDLR members in the past. Unpaid, they have little incentive to remain in the FARDC. End note).

¶9. (SBU) Comment: An attack of the magnitude reported at paragraph four is quite rare, and the FARDC forces may have exaggerated. However, the FDLR is strong in the area, and has displaced well over 100,000 residents around Lubero. One contact who has personal contact with the FDLR because of his role in the DDRRR program told Goma poloff, "they (FDLR) are tired of hiding in the bus, tired of waiting for Kimia II. They are bringing the fight to the FARDC." For its part, the FARDC has not responded. Goma poloff has heard anecdotes from places as diverse as Mwenga and Bunyakiri in South Kivu and Lubero in North Kivu of incidents when the FDLR attacked villages in close proximity to the FARDC, and the government forces refused to pursue the rebels. Some commanders claim they have no orders. Others claim they have no resources. Others admit their soldiers will not take orders. Soldiers unpaid for five months are not motivated fighters. MONUC is also frustrated, having heard assurances from General Amuli and other staff that the FARDC has scheduled an offensive which has not materialized. The UN troops are unlikely to step into the gap.

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¶10. (C) Comment continued: Unsettling events in recent weeks suggest that a critical point may be approaching that will define whether the fragile "peace" in the east can be reinforced or whether the region will revert to more widespread lawlessness and intensified armed conflict. FDLR attacks are increasingly diverse geographically and the FDLR is more brazen in showing contempt for the FARDC. There is currently a potent mix in the east, which could easily re-ignite the conflict: ever-growing indiscipline and discontent within the FARDC; visible signs that "accelerated integration" has been superficial; and the GDRC's seeming lack of will/confidence to pursue Kimia II aggressively. There is also growing speculation in Goma and Kinshasa that President Kabila will invite the RDF back to participate in Kimia II. Given the FARDC's inability to carry out a military operation such as Kimia II, it would appear that some type of outside assistance is needed to bolster the FARDC. If Kabila does invite the Rwandans back, it is a sign he is willing to take a political risk (again) and that the GDRC truly wants to deal with the "FDLR problem." On the other hand, if Kabila opts to stay with the current line-up of FARDC/MONUC for Kimia II, this may be a signal that the GDRC's primary objective in the Umoja Wetu military operation was to neutralize the CNDP and that it is not committed to continue to the fight against the FDLR. End comment.

BROCK